

A PRACTICAL DISCOURSE

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A SERMON
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*"A month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home."
1 Kings 5:14*

IT was right that when a temple was to be built for the Lord God of Israel, the Israelites should take their fair share in the building of it. Therefore a levy was made, and a certain number of men were chosen to work in Lebanon. It was, however, most fitting that work for a gracious God should be joyful work, not the bondage of slaves, but the delight of sons. Solomon did not demand that any Israelite should toil in the mountains and quarries for years together, and leave his own fields to lie waste, but he decreed that the workers should have one month in Lebanon at work on the temple, and two months at home for their own affairs.

Our God is not a taskmaster, and sacred service should not sour into forced labor. Self-sacrifice is the soul of true religion, but we must not demand of others that which would turn religion into slavery. Solomon knew that the common people would grow weary of working even for JEHOVAH Himself, if they were taken away from their own families and inheritances altogether, and therefore in his wisdom he put it so, "One month in Lebanon, and two months at home."

I am about to draw from this text two lessons. They are these, first, that *you and I ought to be rendering service to the Lord our God*, and assisting to build up His spiritual temple, but secondly, that while we labor abroad, *we must be doubly careful to watch over our own households and our own souls*. Marthas must also be Marys. We are bound to serve, but we must not be cumbered with much serving. We must work with Martha and yet sit with Mary at the Master's feet, there must be one month in Lebanon, and two months at home.

I. First then, WE ARE BOUND TO DO SERVICE FOR OUR KING—service for the living temple of our God.

It is not enough for us to say, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore I am saved," that is not the end of it all, else religion were a grand piece of selfishness. Our souls may not be hooped in within our own ribs. Absorption in our own safety and neglect of others would betray a spirit directly opposite to that of Jesus and His true disciples.

No, brethren, as the Father sent His Son into the world, even so has He sent us into the world, that we may be made a blessing to our fellows. Our life work is to prepare living stones which may be built upon the one foundation to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. We are to be hewers of timber and squarers of stones for the house of our God.

Lay home to your hearts your *obligations to the Lord Jesus Christ*. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price," therefore no man lives unto himself. Your own salvation is of the utmost importance to you, but an essential part of it is salvation from selfishness. If you begin and end with your own interests, you are the servants of self, and not of the Lord Jesus.

We owe our all to the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and henceforth His business is our business, and what is His business but to seek and to save that which was lost? We are now the lifelong servants of Him "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor." Shall we grudge our month in Lebanon? Nay, rather will we not see to it that the whole twelve months of the year are dedicated to temple service, since He has called us to be priests, and therefore we always dwell in His house?

Remember also our *obligations to others*. How were we converted? Was it not through the instrumentality of some Christian man or woman? Directly or indirectly, it was so in every case, for those who have gone to glory long ago have left us debtors for the knowledge of the Gospel which they handed down to us. Most of us were blessed by direct agency, a good book was quietly placed in our way, a kind word was gently spoken, an earnest sermon was aimed at us, a holy example was set before us, by such things as these we were drawn to Christ.

By the tears and prayers of others we were brought to the Savior's feet. Some owe their conversion to their parents, others to Sabbath school teachers, others to preachers of the Word, the bulk of us were brought to Jesus by some one instrumentality or another. Pay your debt then. You also are to bring another to Jesus as a recompense to His servants.

A certain generous man used to give liberally to the poor, but he did it in this fashion, he said to each one, "I only lend this money to you, and you are to pay it back to me when you are able to do so, by giving as much as this to another poor person." That is the method of our Lord Jesus Christ, He grants us a knowledge of His Gospel under bond that we tell it to others. Brethren, we are debtors, if we are built up a spiritual house, let us gladly give our month in Lebanon that other stones may be builded into the heavenly temple.

Besides, there is *a life within every Christian* which is the best prompter to holy service. My brother, if you are born again, you cannot be idle, for the life of God is never sluggish. Did not Jesus say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"? If you are not diligent in sacred service, you will soon be afflicted with doubts and fears, for this disease attends on spiritual sloth. The month on breezy Lebanon is for your soul's health. To be idle is to sicken, but to serve God is health and delight.

It is like swimming to a strong swimmer, he delights to breast the waves. It is like flight to the condor of the Andes, who joyfully spreads his wings towards the sun. Tell the eagle that it is a toil to mount into the ether, and his joyful flight replies, "Toil to me to fly? I was made on purpose to dart among lightnings, and to be at home amid tempests. My eye can even dare to gaze upon the sun."

O brothers, it is not slavery to serve Christ, even when it involves stern effort, the labor brings its own refreshment. The more we can do for Christ, the more are we indulging those sacred instincts which regeneration has implanted within us. Let us shoulder the axe and spend our month in Lebanon. Felling trees is fit work even for premiers, and preparing stones for the spiritual temple would be an honorable occupation for angels.

This work is *most beneficial to ourselves*. Those Christian people who do nothing are usually troublesome, for they are at leisure to find fault with those who are doing their best. Many can see exactly how it ought to be done, and yet do nothing. They discover where the worker fails, they detect the little crotchets and peculiarities which reveal themselves in his service. The minister would preach so much better if he did it in the patent way which his critics have invented. Why do not these fellows attempt the work themselves? No, they are too fine for that, their high vocation is to review the defects of their brethren. I am sick of them. Is not their Lord weary of them too?

Working for the Lord necessitates prayer, and this is a great blessing to us. If a man gives himself wholly to soul-winning, he must be much in prayer, for he will be all at sea without help from heaven. If he tries to comfort the downcast penitent, how readily will he be baffled! How soon will he cry to the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to do the work effectually! Every grace which a Christian possesses is bettered by its use in heavenly service.

The practical value of the Gospel will soon strike you if you labor among the fallen, the ignorant, the infidel. Does anybody know how precious the Gospel is till he has seen it light up the eye that was dim with despondency? Does any man know how the joyful sound of the name of Jesus can charm a heart till he has seen the smile of newborn faith?

I do not see how our coming memories can minister to our eternal happiness unless we earnestly labor to bring sinners to the Savior. Let us be up in earnest, and win jewels for Jesus and happy reflections for ourselves! Will it not enlarge our heaven to see those in glory who were saved by our

word? Was Rutherford wrong when he said, “Oh, to see the people of Anwoth in heaven shall be seven heavens to me”? I can truly say of my hearers that the heaven of each one shall be another heaven to me. For this joy let us each one gladly take his month in Lebanon. Let those who have begun to loiter arouse themselves. It ill becomes any of us to be hearers of the Word for ourselves, and never publishers of it to others.

II. It remains that I now remind you, that if we take our month in Lebanon in active service for the Lord’s house, **WE MUST TAKE SPECIAL CARE TO SPEND OUR TWO MONTHS AT HOME.**

Our own households must have special attention. The first duty of a Christian man is within his own heart, the second is within his own house. Teach children? Yes, by all means, but begin with your own. Convert sinners? Yes, but labor first to win those who are round about you. Religion must begin at home. The apostles were to begin at Jerusalem, because Jerusalem was their home. If we care not for our own households, we shall be worse than heathen men and publicans.

I am afraid that many professing Christians will have the doom of Eli pronounced upon them. Eli’s sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. He said a gentle word to them, “Do not do so, my sons,” but he did not put his foot down and tell them plainly, “This shall not be done in my house. You shall not profane the sanctuary of God by open sin if I can prevent it, I am resolved upon that.” The end of his indulgence was their destruction, and you know how sorrowfully the old man ended his days, and what a curse fell upon his household in later generations.

God grant that it may never be so with one of us! If anybody should ask me whether I know an Eli, I fear I could put my finger on several. I do not say that I can see one here—I will not look that way, but let each one ask, “Lord, is it I?”

Rest assured that all our talk about religion, and all our public labors will go for very little if our own families run wild. It is a horrible thing in Israel when the children of godly men are the sons of Belial. Such cases do occur, and then some say to me, “It is written, ‘Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it,’ how do you make that out when So-and-so’s son is such an open rebel?”

I answer, “Whenever I have been able to lift the veil, I have invariably found a reason for the children’s non-conversion in the mismanagement of the household, or in the inconsistent conduct of the parents.” I suspect that we may generally say, “Is there not a cause?” I will not say “*always*,” because singular things do happen, but yet if God gives His people grace to walk uprightly before Him, and they pray for their children, and instruct them, and set them a godly example, the children usually follow in their father’s footsteps.

Take heed then, that you spend your two months at home. Do not offer to God the sacrifice of public service smeared with the blood of your home duties. Do not diminish your care in your own house, for the neglect of domestic piety will prevent the acceptance of your public service. God forbid that when you talk to outsiders, they should reply, “Look at your own children.”

Our own offspring must be prayed for, and we must do more than that—we must correct them for sin, instruct them in the Scriptures, and pray with them personally till we weep over them. Family prayer must be maintained in a devout and interesting manner, and our young people must go with us to the sanctuary, and be trained to treasure up what they hear. I know the Spirit of God alone can renew their hearts, but He is not backward to bless the means.

If the Lord helps us to be earnest with our children, what a blessed reward awaits us! “I have no greater joy than this, that my children walk in the truth,” every Christian parent may say this of his offspring. Oh, the delight it is to look upon sons and daughters all in Christ!—to hear and know that they are as earnest for the Redeemer’s kingdom as we are! All the honor must be given to the sovereign grace of God, but the comfort is ours.

I am sure that, when my mother pleaded with me, she was doing better than if she had addressed large assemblies. I am equally sure that when my father knelt down with me alone, and pleaded with

God for me, and besought me to pray for myself, he was doing a better day's work then when he was preaching, though in that he has had great blessing.

Who knows what your son may be? Who knows what usefulness God may give to your daughter? Surely, if Dr. Busby used to take off his hat when he went into the schoolroom because he did not know who the boys might be, for they might turn out to be great statesmen or judges, you might take off your hat to your children, for you cannot tell what God may make of them. Pray for grace to look well to the ways of your household, that they may bring no discredit upon the cause of Christ. Use well those two months at home.

Lastly, I change the run of thought to reach another point. There is a home that is nearer home than our own homes, and that is the state of things within our own breasts. If we give a certain care to the service of God publicly, *there must be double attention to the work of grace within*. We must not neglect the cultivation of our own heart. We must watch our own growth in grace, our own communion with Christ, our own faith, our own hope, our own love, for if we do not, we shall be in great danger.

I fear that many Christians are busy here and there, and their own spiritual life is withering. They accomplish little because their spiritual money is put into a bag which is full of holes. They work hard, but take no fish because they never mend their nets. If we neglect our private prayers, we shall not "so run that we may obtain."

In some cases the neglect will prove to be fatal. I do not mean in the case of the genuine child of God, but I do mean in the case of many whom we take to be such. They keep the vineyards of others, but their own vineyard they have not kept. They urge repentance, but they have not themselves repented, they teach faith, but they have not themselves believed. They forget the work of the Holy Spirit within them in their zeal for their own fussy endeavors to outdo others.

If you neglect your own souls, and hope that you will get right by performing Christian duties, you are grievously mistaken. If you try to shine, and have no oil in your vessels with your lamps, your lamps will go out, and you will die in the dark. If you try to tell others what you do not know, and speak to them of a Savior in whom you have never trusted, your life will be a dreadful failure. You will preach and teach your own condemnation, what else can come of it? Do see to it that if you go up to Lebanon, the axe is first laid to the root of your own sins.

Supposing the professor to be a real and true Christian, yet, if he is always active and never contemplative, if he spends much time in working and none in prayer and Bible reading, it will be very weakening to himself and damaging to his work. A weak hand may wield a good tool, but it cannot do much with it. When you are sickly, ailing, out of sorts as to body, you cannot do your work well. It would be a foolish thing to put a poor consumptive man to labor like a strong laborer on the railway, he would weary himself and do little with great pain. Fussy work that is done for Christ, without communion with Christ, comes to nothing because it is not worked in the strength of God.

O my brethren, nothing can come out of us if it is not first worked in us by the Holy Ghost! It is essential that a Christian worker should himself be the workmanship of God. If we would heal, we must be healthy. If we get out of fellowship with Jesus, it will lead to innumerable evils, and the more we try to do, the more those evils will show themselves.

We shall grow proud of our doings, and we shall censure others till we grow unbearable. We shall become self-confident, and the more we attempt, the more self-confident we shall become. Or else we shall take to murmuring, and grow displeased because God does not prosper our work, and we will feel like Cain when the Lord had no respect to his offering. You must walk in the light as God is in the light if you are to enlighten a dark world and glorify your Lord.

Especially let me say to you, dear friends, there must be the two months at home as to *prayer*. Do not forsake the mercy seat. Be in the frequent practice of prayer, and—what is better—be in the spirit of prayer always. May the Holy Spirit lead you to baptize every duty into the pure stream of grace, and to do the same in every lesson in the school, every sermon you deliver, and every tract you give away!

Pray over the whole business. Prepare for the one month in Lebanon by the two months at home spent in pleading with God for a blessing.

Be much in *Bible reading*. We do not read the Bible half as much as we should. Look how the Puritans searched it from end to end. How familiar they were with every book! What blessed family prayer there must have been in the household of Philip Henry since it led Matthew Henry to write that famous Commentary! Oh, that we had more Bible searching and Bible preaching! Talking about the Bible is well enough, but searching the Scriptures is better. Feed on the Word yourselves, or else your teaching will be thin and watery.

So too, as to *self-examination*—a duty much neglected, let us not fail in it. How few there are who look over the actions of the day before they fall asleep at night, but how well it would be to revive the practice!

Repentance too, that sweet grace with the diamonds in her eyes—sweet tears of holy grief for all that has been amiss—is not this pushed aside? This must not be.

And *faith* also, the constant trusting the Savior, should we not exercise it more continuously? Oh, to have times of quiet for the exercise of faith and the growth of love!

As for *communion with God*, oh, that we lived in it always! But we do not get time enough. We do not take time enough to get near our God. We are like men who eat their meals in a hurry, for business calls them away. If a man has no regular meals, but gets a snack here and a snack there, he soon gets out of sorts. He needs time for regular food and its mastication and digestion. We want the same for our holy feasts upon the heavenly food, and to this end I would urge Solomon's rule—one month in Lebanon, but two months at home. A word to the wise is enough, and therefore I say no more.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 KINGS 5, PSALMS 48 AND 95

1 Kings Chapter 5. Verses 1-5. *And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David. And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on every side, so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.*

When God intends a man to do any special work for Him, He will find him all the helpers he needs. Sometimes those helpers may seem to be very unlikely persons, but—

*“Remember that omnipotence
Has servants everywhere.”*

See, dear friends, when the Lord had given rest to Solomon, he proceeded with the building of the temple which David had planned. Whenever God blesses you, show your gratitude to Him by undertaking some special service for Him. Now that you are out of your recent trouble, bring your sacrifice of thanksgiving, and do all that you can for your Lord, your time of rest may not last as long as you could wish, therefore use it while you have it to God's glory.

6. *Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like the Sidonians.*

It is not every man who has every gift. Hiram and his Sidonians could hew timber more skillfully than Solomon and his Israelites. God can always find the right sort of men to do His work. Do not be dispirited because you cannot do everything, why should you? Should not somebody else have a share, and be also permitted to have the honor of serving his God? It is well that you cannot do all that has to be done, and that somebody else can do something better than you can.

7-8. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, which has given unto David a wise son over this great people. And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for:—

It is always a good thing, before you agree to do anything, to consider it, to look at it from all points of view. I wish that in giving money to the service of God, there was more consideration as to the objective for which it is given. Some give simply because others do, some because they are asked, but he gives best who considers the matter, and looks all round, and then says, “Yes, this is a just claim upon me as a servant of God, and therefore I will respond to it.” So, “Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for:”—

8-11. And I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household. So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire. And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

Is it not a very pleasing thought that both Jews and Gentiles built the temple? Solomon put the big stones together, and cut the cedar and fir trees into the proper shape, yet they were Hiram's fir trees and Hiram's cedar trees, and he floated them by sea to the place where they were landed, and whence they were dragged to Jerusalem, and God will let His people of every race and nation have a share in the building of His great spiritual house.

12-14. And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together. And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

That was a capital rule, “a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home.” You who work for God must have your month at work, but you also need two months at home to attend to your own business. There are some people who keep always at Lebanon, always at work, but there is spiritual work to be done at home as well, getting your heart ready for service, sharpening your tools, looking after your own flocks and herds, and so on

There was hard work to be done, and if it was to be done well, the workers needed to have their sinews and muscles in good order, so “a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home.” One prayer in the class and two prayers at home, one hour of teaching the lesson, twice as much time taken in getting it up and preparing it.

15. And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains;

What were their names? I cannot tell you, but probably there was a book in which they were all recorded, and Christ has many humble workers, hewers of wood and bearers of burdens, whose names are not known among men. Well, what is in a name? Let us be content to serve under our greater Solomon, and let the whole glory of building His spiritual temple go to Him. Never mind who bears the burdens or who hews the stones, the temple is for God, so let God be glorified, and not man.

16. Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

There must be various degrees among the workers in the service of God. He is a Sovereign, and He divides unto every man according as He wills. How this ought to hush all envy and rebellion against the officers in the work of God whom He has called to be overseers of others!

17. *And the king commanded,—*

That is at the bottom of all service for our King, let us but get a command from the King, and we obey at once.

17-18. *And they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers:*

I am glad they are mentioned here, for there are still some brothers and sisters who are not hewers, but they are stonesquarers. Perhaps they do not see many conversions through their efforts, but they do a great deal of the work of instructing the converts. They polish what other people have excavated, they are stonesquarers, and just as the temple at Jerusalem needed the work of the stonesquarers, so does God's great spiritual temple need those who square as well as those who hew the stones that are to be built into it.

18. *So they prepared timber and stones to build the house.*

Nothing is too good or too costly to be given to God, and let us reckon no labor too hard or too heavy that will bring glory to His holy name.

Psalm 48

A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah.

It is not every psalm that is a song, for some psalms are full of sorrow, and it is not every song that is a psalm, for alas! there are many songs that are mere foolish rhymes or something worse, but here is a happy combination, "A Song and Psalm for the sons of Korah."

Verse 1. *Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised—*

Surely a great God should have great praise, "greatly to be praised"—

1. *In the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.*

If there is any place where He ought to be praised, surely it is there. Even if all the rest of the world is silent, let God be praised "in the mountain of his holiness." Holy people must praise the holy God. It is natural that they should do so. It needs holy people to see God, and when they do see Him, their eyes will glisten with delight, and their voices will ring with His praise.

2. *Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.*

Thus the Jew praises Jerusalem, and thus the Christian praises the church. The church of Christ is, to His eyes, the most precious thing in the whole world, and there is nothing upon the face of the earth that is so lovely in the sight of God as His own chosen church.

3. *God is known in her palaces for a refuge.*

Are not all her people kings? Therefore they live in palaces, and they none of them trust in themselves, God is known to them as a refuge.

4-5. *For, lo, the kings were assembled, they passed by together. They saw it, and so they marvelled;*

They came up with their confederate bands of kings to attack Jerusalem, and they looked at it, and wondered at its strength and beauty.

5. *They were troubled, and hasted away.*

If they came quickly, they went away still more quickly, hurrying off like a band of frightened children.

6-7. *Fear took hold upon them there, and pain, as of a woman in travail. Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.*

God broke up the confederacies of kings that were leagued against His people. Even the great galleons of Tarshish were dashed to pieces when the Lord blew with His wind, and scattered them as, many centuries later, He did with the “Invincible” Armada on our own coasts.

8. *As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God: God will establish it for ever. Selah* [See sermon #2014, As We have Heard, so have We Seen].

Well might there be a pause here for solemn consideration, for putting the harp strings right, and lifting up the heart to the Lord in praise.

9. *We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple* [See sermon #2783, A Worthy Theme for Thought].

Here is a blessed subject, “thy lovingkindness, O God,”—a blessed people, we who have enjoyed it—a blessed occupation, “we have thought of thy lovingkindness”—and a blessed place in which to do it, “in the midst of thy temple.” When we are in the midst of the Lord’s people, in the midst of His church, then is the time for sweet and blessed thoughts concerning our gracious God.

10. *According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth:*

As is God’s name, so is His fame, unto the very ends of the earth shall men hear the praises of the Lord, especially when He delivers His people.

10. *Thy right hand is full of righteousness.*

God’s right hand is never empty, “thy right hand is full,” and when He comes to sinners, He deals with them in righteousness, and when He comes to His saints in mercy, it is still in righteousness. “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins”

11. *Let mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments.*

That is, the smaller cities of Judah, let them sing, as well as Jerusalem, the high praises of their delivering God. Perhaps it refers to the women who, in times of war, have to suffer most and worst of all, let them be loudest in their joyous music, as Miriam took her timbrel, and led the song of the women on the shore of the Red Sea, so let the daughters of Judah be glad because of the Lord’s righteous judgments upon the enemies of His people.

12-13. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her: count the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.*

Sunday school teachers, note the security of the church of God, mark the eternal truth on which she is founded, the everlasting promises by which she is guarded, the forts and bastions of omnipotence that preserve her from the assaults of her enemies! and then tell all this “to the generation following.”

14. *For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*

But the Hebrew is better still, “He will be our guide even over death.” We shall trample down death, or as one puts it, we shall stand by the grave of death. What a glorious place for us to stand in when death itself is dead through the ever-living Christ, and the resurrection power that comes through His death! “He will be our guide even over death.”

Psalm Chapter 95. Verse 1. *O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*

The worship of God should always be joyful, hence there is to be much singing in it. God is not like Baal, who can be worshipped with crying and lamentation, and the cutting of the flesh with knives. We who believe in Him regard Him not as the destroyer or the avenger, but as “the rock of our salvation.” You who have hidden in that Rock can truly praise Him.

2. *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,—*

Let us not be afraid to stand in the immediate presence of God, on the other hand, let us not worship Him with lightness and frivolity, but let us come before His presence with due reverence and solemnity, and when we come, let it be “with thanksgiving.” I need not remind you what innumerable reasons we have for thanksgiving. Let us render to God thanks according to what we have received from Him.

2-3. *And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.*

There are no other gods that are worthy to bear that name, but JEHOVAH is the great King above all that are called gods.

4. *In his hand are the deep places of the earth:*

The innermost caverns, the deepest mines of earth, and the far-down places in the depths of the ocean, these are all in God's hand.

4. *The strength of the hills is his also.*

He is the God of the hills as well as the God of the valleys.

Let us read this verse again. "In his hand are the deep places of the earth." Are any of you there today? Then praise Him out of the deep places. "The strength of the hills is his also." Are you on the tops of the mountains today? Then give Him the praise who placed you there lest through pride your feet should slip.

5. *The sea is his, and he made it:*

Men cannot parcel it out into estates, or cut it up into allotments, as they do with the solid earth, but "the sea is his," there God reigns alone, and surveys the broad acres of the wild waste of waters as His own.

5. *And his hands formed the dry land.*

As though it were so much plastic clay, out of which He had molded this great globe, and fashioned the various countries in which the nations of mankind dwell.

6-7. *O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

Blessed are we if we can say this in very truth, we are highly privileged to have this God to be our God, and to be ourselves His purchased inheritance, the objects of His daily care, "the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

7-8. *Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart,—*

It is a tender heart that hears God's voice, and the heart that hears His voice is sure to be made tender. These two things act and re-act the one upon the other.

8-11. *As in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

They had seen God's work, but they did not know His ways, they had not the sense to perceive the hand of God even in His miracles, or when they did perceive it, they oft rebelled against Him. Oh, that we may not be like that unbelieving generation that grieved the Lord for forty years in the wilderness!

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